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Brzezinski Backs Obama

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Barack Obama, combating the perception that he is too young and inexperienced to handle a dangerous world, got a boost yesterday from a paragon of foreign policy eminence, Zbigniew Brzezinski. The former national security adviser announced on Bloomberg Television's "Political Capital With Al Hunt" that he is supporting the junior senator from Illinois for president.

Obama "recognizes that the challenge is a new face, a new sense of direction, a new definition of America's role in the world," said Brzezinski, who keeps an office at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"Obama is clearly more effective and has the upper hand. He has a sense of what is historically relevant and what is needed from the United States in relationship to the world."

Brzezinski, who had a relatively hawkish reputation in the Carter administration but has been an outspoken critic of President Bush and the Iraq war, rejected the notion that Obama's Senate colleague Hillary Clinton is more experienced in foreign affairs. "Being a former first lady doesn't prepare you to be president," he said. "Clinton's foreign policy approach is 'very conventional,' he added. "I don't think the country needs to go back to what we had eight years ago."

He also defended Obama's position in his recent foreign policy tiff with Clinton, in which she called him "naive" for saying he would be willing to meet with the leaders of U.S. antagonists such as Iran and Venezuela. "What's the hang-up about negotiating with the Syrians or with the Iranians?" Brzezinski said. "What it in effect means," he said, is "that you only talk to people who agree with you."

— Alec MacGillis

ODD ALIGNMENT



Zbigniew Brzezinski says he is supporting Barack Obama for president. (By Carol T. Powers -- Bloomberg News)

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